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09/244,304 02/03/99 BEACH

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EXAMINER

LM01/0809

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OWEGO NY 13827

CHUNG, C

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2764

DATE MAILED:

08/09/00

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/244,304

Applicant(s)
Beach et al

Examiner
Chang Y. Chung

Group Art Unit
2764



☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Feb 3, 1999

☒ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle* 35 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claim

☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some* ☒ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☒ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

— SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES —

Art Unit: 2764

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-9 have been examined.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein (US 5,845,285) in view of Geer (US 5,930,778).

As per claim 1, Klein discloses a method for operating a computing system, comprising the steps of:

Art Unit: 2764

processing electronic invoices received from a vendor to identify duplicate invoices (abstract, column 5, particularly lines 55-65, column 6, particularly lines 1-5);

introducing data (invoices) not identified as duplicates into a system (column 26, particularly lines 32-36); and

electronically rejecting data (invoices) identified as duplicates without introducing the data into the system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43).

Klein does not explicitly teach preprocessing of invoices. However, Geer discloses preprocessing of original invoices before introduction into a database (title, column 5, lines 58-60, column 6, particularly lines 43-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use method of duplicate invoice identification of Klein in preprocessing of invoices before introduction into a database of Geer because this would allow duplicate data to be sorted out as soon as possible.

Klein does not explicitly teach introduction to and rejection from a accounts payable data base. However, Klein does suggest this feature by disclosing correction of the system (column 26, particularly lines 40-44) and filtering database (column 27, particularly lines 22-25). Further, accounts payable data base is deemed to be inherent in Klein's description of invoicing system (column 5, particularly lines 46-65). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to introduce and reject data from an accounts payable database because this would allow filtering and sorting out to be implemented as soon as data is available.

Art Unit: 2764

As per claim 2, Klein discloses a method for operating a computing system, comprising the steps of:

auditing invoice file for a duplicate invoice item (abstract, column 5, particularly lines 55-65, column 6, particularly lines 1-5);

upon determining data is a duplicate invoice having a same invoice number (column 6, lines 3-10), creating an electronic duplicate data transaction (column 26, particularly lines 37-43); and

posting to the system only data determined not to be duplicate (column 26, particularly lines 32-36).

Klein does not explicitly teach grabbing an inbound EDI invoice file from a vendor before it is input to a accounts payable database and creating a transaction to a vendor. However, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of data entry to grab data before input into a database for the purpose of examination for error. Further, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of electronic communication and commerce to use EDI for invoicing. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to grab an inbound EDI invoice data before inputting it into a database because this would allow detection of duplicate as soon as possible.

Klein does not explicitly teach creating transaction back to the vendor. However, Klein suggests this feature by disclosing a warning report system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention

Art Unit: 2764

to create a transaction back to the vendor because this would allow the vendor to be informed of the mistake and take corrective actions.

Klein does not explicitly teach determining duplicate invoice having same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, and same item number. However, Klein at least suggests this feature by disclosing determining duplicate invoice by comparing invoice number. Furthermore, official notice is taken that determining duplicate invoice having a same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, and same item number is old and well known in the art of invoice comparison. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to determine duplicate invoices by comparing same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number and same item number because this would allow accurate identification of duplicate invoices.

As per claim 3, Klein discloses auditing step comprising sorting invoices against invoice number (column 6, particularly lines 8-10).

Klein does not explicitly teach auditing step comprising first sorting invoice against an accounts payable production table for same vendor, second sorting hits from said first sorting for same purchase order billed, third sorting hits from second sorting for same items billed on purchase order, and fourth sorting hits from third sorting to identify invoice as duplicate invoice if it contains an item having a net sum greater than zero. However, Klein does discuss using neural network (column 27, particularly lines 54-65) that executes multiple comparing and sorting hits (column 28, particularly lines 28-41), and identifying data as duplicate if it does not

Art Unit: 2764

pass a threshold number of hits (column 28, particularly lines 44-45). This suggests sorting of invoice for same vendor, purchase order billed, and items billed, since they are essential for identifying duplicates. Further Klein also discuss threshold value, term to describe the function of the "net sum greater than zero" of applicants' invention. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use invoice for same vendor, purchase order billed, and items billed as entries that are used in neural network comparing and sorting method of Klein because those entry values are essential for determining duplicate data. Further, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use zero as the threshold value disclosed in Klein because this would allow maximum detection of duplicates.

As per claim 4, Klein discloses a method for operating a computing system responsive to receipt of an electronic input (abstract).

Klein discloses automatically identifying previously received invoices having the same vendor invoice identifier (column 6, particularly lines 8-10, column 16, lines 1-5).

Klein does not explicitly teach automatically grabbing an invoice from a vendor before it is input to a accounts payable database and creating a transaction to a vendor. However, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of data entry to grab data before input into a database for the purpose of examination for error. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to automatically grab an invoice data

Art Unit: 2764

before inputting it into a database because this would allow detection of duplicate as soon as possible.

Further, Klein does not explicitly teach automatically identifying invoices having corresponding items, and calculating the net sum of items on input invoice having corresponding items. However, Klein does discuss using neural network (column 27, particularly lines 54-65) that executes multiple comparing and sorting hits (column 28, particularly lines 28-41), and identifying data as duplicate if it does not pass a threshold number of hits (column 28, particularly lines 44-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use item as a comparison factor in Klein's system because type of item is essential in determining duplicates. Further, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to calculating the net sum of items to determine if the data is duplicate since this would utilize Klein's threshold value.

Klein does not explicitly teach automatically communicating a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor without posting the input invoice to the accounts payable database. However, Klein suggests this feature by disclosing a warning report system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to communicate a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor because this would allow the vendor to be informed of the mistake and take corrective actions. Further, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

Art Unit: 2764

applicant's invention to refrain from posting the input invoice to the accounts payable database because this would prevent posting of duplicate entry.

Klein discloses posting to the system data determined not to be duplicate (column 26, particularly lines 32-36).

As per claim 5, Klein discloses a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for processing electronic input (abstract), said method step comprising:

automatically processing electronic invoices received from a vendor to identify duplicate invoices (abstract, column 5, particularly lines 55-65, column 6, particularly lines 1-5, column 16, lines 1-5);

introducing data (invoices) not identified as duplicates into a system (column 26, particularly lines 32-36); and

automatically rejecting data (invoices) identified as duplicates without introducing the data into the system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43, column 27, lines 26-29).

Klein does not explicitly teach preprocessing of invoices before introduction into an accounts payable data base. However, Geer discloses preprocessing of invoices before introduction into an accounts payable data base (abstract, column 6, particularly lines 43-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use method of duplicate invoice identification of Klein in preprocessing of invoices of Geer because this would allow duplicate data to be sorted out as soon as possible.

Art Unit: 2764

Klein does not explicitly teach introduction to and rejection from a accounts payable data base. However, Klein does suggest this feature by disclosing correction of the system (column 26, particularly lines 40-44) and filtering database (column 27, particularly lines 22-25). Further, accounts payable data base is deemed to be inherent in Klein's description of invoicing system (column 5, particularly lines 46-65). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to introduce and reject data from an accounts payable database because this would allow filtering and sorting out to be implemented as soon as data is available.

Klein does not explicitly teach determining duplicate invoice having same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero. However, Klein at least suggests this feature by disclosing determining duplicate invoice by comparing invoice number. Furthermore, official notice is taken that determining duplicate invoice having a same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero is old and well known in the art of invoice comparison. It would have been obvious to one or ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to determine duplicate invoices by comparing same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero because this would allow accurate identification of duplicate invoices.

Art Unit: 2764

As per claim 6, Klein discloses a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for processing electronic input (abstract).

Klein discloses identifying previously received invoices having the same vendor invoice identifier (column 6, particularly lines 8-10).

Klein does not explicitly teach grabbing an invoice from a vendor before it is input to a accounts payable database and creating a transaction to a vendor. However, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of data entry to grab data before input into a database for the purpose of examination for error. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to grab an invoice data before inputting it into a database because this would allow detection of duplicate as soon as possible.

Further, Klein does not explicitly teach identifying invoices having corresponding items, and calculating the net sum of items on input invoice having corresponding items. However, Klein does discuss using neural network (column 27, particularly lines 54-65) that executes multiple comparing and sorting hits (column 28, particularly lines 28-41), and identifying data as duplicate if it does not pass a threshold number of hits (column 28, particularly lines 44-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use item as a comparison factor in Klein's system because type of item is essential in determining duplicates. Further, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of

Art Unit: 2764

applicants' invention to calculating the net sum of items to determine if the data is duplicate since this would utilize Klein's threshold value.

Klein does not explicitly teach communicating a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor. However, Klein suggests this feature by disclosing a warning report system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to communicate a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor because this would allow the vendor to be informed of the mistake and take corrective actions.

Klein does not explicitly teach grabbing, identifying and calculating steps without posting the input invoice to the accounts payable database. However, official notice is taken that performing integrity analysis on data without posting that data to a permanent database is old and well known in the art of database. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to perform analysis without posting it to the database because this would allow duplicate data from being posted.

Klein discloses posting to the system data determined not to be duplicate (column 26, particularly lines 32-36).

As per claim 7, Klein discloses an article of manufacture comprising a computer useable medium having program code means (abstract).

Klein discloses identifying previously received invoices having the same vendor invoice identifier (column 6, particularly lines 8-10).

Art Unit: 2764

Klein does not explicitly teach grabbing an invoice from a vendor before it is input to a accounts payable database and creating a transaction to a vendor. However, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of data entry to grab data before input into a database for the purpose of examination for error. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to grab an invoice data before inputting it into a database because this would allow detection of duplicate as soon as possible.

Further, Klein does not explicitly teach identifying invoices having corresponding items, and calculating the net sum of items on input invoice having corresponding items. However, Klein does discuss using neural network (column 27, particularly lines 54-65) that executes multiple comparing and sorting hits (column 28, particularly lines 28-41), and identifying data as duplicate if it does not pass a threshold number of hits (column 28, particularly lines 44-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use item as a comparison factor in Klein's system because type of item is essential in determining duplicates. Further, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to calculating the net sum of items to determine if the data is duplicate since this would utilize Klein's threshold value.

Klein does not explicitly teach communicating a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor. However, Klein suggests this feature by disclosing a warning report system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to communicate a duplicate invoice rejection message

Art Unit: 2764

back to the vendor because this would allow the vendor to be informed of the mistake and take corrective actions.

Klein discloses posting to the system data determined not to be duplicate (column 26, particularly lines 32-36).

As per claim 8, Klein discloses an article of manufacture comprising a computer readable medium having computer readable program code means (abstract).

Klein discloses computer readable code means for:

processing electronic invoices received from a vendor to identify duplicate invoices (abstract, column 5, particularly lines 55-65, column 6, particularly lines 1-5);

introducing data (invoices) not identified as duplicates into a system (column 26, particularly lines 32-36); and

rejecting data (invoices) identified as duplicates without introducing the data into the system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43).

Klein does not explicitly teach preprocessing of invoices. However, Geer discloses preprocessing of invoices (abstract, column 6, particularly lines 43-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use method of duplicate invoice identification of Klein in preprocessing of invoices of Geer because this would allow duplicate data to be sorted out as soon as possible.

Klein does not explicitly teach introduction to and rejection from a accounts payable data base. However, Klein does suggest this feature by disclosing correction of the system (column

Art Unit: 2764

26, particularly lines 40-44) and filtering database (column 27, particularly lines 22-25). Further, accounts payable data base is deemed to be inherent in Klein's description of invoicing system (column 5, particularly lines 46-65). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to introduce and reject data from an accounts payable database because this would allow filtering and sorting out to be implemented as soon as data is available.

Klein does not explicitly teach determining duplicate invoice having same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero. However, Klein at least suggests this feature by disclosing determining duplicate invoice by comparing invoice number. Furthermore, official notice is taken that determining duplicate invoice having a same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero is old and well known in the art of invoice comparison. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicant's invention to determine duplicate invoices by comparing same vendor invoice designation, same purchase order number, same item number, and having sum greater than zero because this would allow accurate identification of duplicate invoices.

As per claim 9, Klein discloses a computing system responsive to receipt of an electronic input (abstract).

Klein discloses identifying previously received invoices having the same vendor invoice identifier (column 6, particularly lines 8-10).

Art Unit: 2764

Klein does not explicitly teach grabbing an invoice from a vendor before it is input to a accounts payable database and creating a transaction to a vendor. However, official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art of data entry to grab data before input into a database for the purpose of examination for error. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to grab an invoice data before inputting it into a database because this would allow detection of duplicate as soon as possible.

Further, Klein does not explicitly teach identifying invoices having corresponding items, and calculating the net sum of items on input invoice having corresponding items. However, Klein does discuss using neural network (column 27, particularly lines 54-65) that executes multiple comparing and sorting hits (column 28, particularly lines 28-41), and identifying data as duplicate if it does not pass a threshold number of hits (column 28, particularly lines 44-45). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to use item as a comparison factor in Klein's system because type of item is essential in determining duplicates. Further, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to calculating the net sum of items to determine if the data is duplicate since this would utilize Klein's threshold value.

Klein does not explicitly teach communicating a duplicate invoice rejection message back to the vendor. However, Klein suggests this feature by disclosing a warning report system (column 26, particularly lines 38-43). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of applicants' invention to communicate a duplicate invoice rejection message

Art Unit: 2764

back to the vendor because this would allow the vendor to be informed of the mistake and take corrective actions.

Klein discloses posting to the system data determined not to be duplicate (column 26, particularly lines 32-36).

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 5/30/2000 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant asserts that prior arts do not teach or suggest applicant's claimed invention. The examiner traverses applicant's arguments and disagrees.

The applicant contends that Klein (US 5,845,285) is auditing a database, whereas applicant's invention relates to preprocessing an invoice before it is entered into a database. However, Klein is not used to show preprocessing in examiner's rejection. Geer (US 5,930,778) specifically discloses system for coordinating invoice processing *at the point of receipt*, and is intended to eliminate duplicative data (column 5, lines 58-61). Further, applicant's invention states that preprocessing is essentially a process that is performed before it is "committed to the production accounts payable environment" (abstract of the application). Klein's system deals with filtering database to identify duplicate/fraudulent data. One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that the original, unfiltered database of Klein's system is in effect a temporary database. Furthermore, the filtering the database into a permanent database of Klein's system

Art Unit: 2764

would, in effect, be equivalent to committing to the production accounts payable environment. One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that batch processing of Klein (with unfiltered database as the buffer) would be equivalent to preprocessing the data and committing it to a permanent database.

The applicant contends that applicant teaches the specific criteria upon which duplicate invoice may be identified automatically, by a computer, without the human intervention. The applicant cites Klein's disclosure, specifically column 7, lines 15-17, column 8, lines 5-9, and column 27, lines 20-25, and contends that Klein's system requires human intervention. This is not so. Klein's system has option of whether or not to verify the audit by human intervention, but can also be automated (column 27, lines 26-30). Further, the human intervention in Klein's system is necessary only for verifying purposes, and not for identifying the duplicates. Moreover, automation of known steps, such as checking for duplicates before committing the data into a database, is deemed to be obvious (*In re Venner*, 120 USPQ 192, 194; 262 F2d 91 (CCPA 1958)).

The applicant cites Geer at column 9, lines 45-50, and contends that Geer performs "unwinding of transactions that applicants' invention prevents". Geer at column 9 lines 45-50 is relevant to processing of dishonored checks, and is unrelated to processing/identifying duplicates. It is noted that dishonored checks/invoices and duplicate checks/invoices are different. As per duplicates, Geer's system coordinates invoice processing at the point of receipt, and eliminates duplicative data (column 5, lines 57-61).

Art Unit: 2764

The applicant contends that Geer does not teach preprocessing of invoices. The applicant argues that column 6, lines 41-44 of Geer is irrelevant to preprocessing. The examiner disagrees. Before the data is entered into the collection system, the data is converted into electronic form and sorted in Geer's system (column 6, lines 41-44). The conversion and sorting at least suggests identification of duplicates, as elimination of duplicates is one of Geer's objectives. The applicant further mentions dishonored checks and the "revers[ing]" of process that is necessary. The applicant's invention is not concerned with dishonored checks, but rather duplicates.

With respect to claims 2, 4, and 5, applicant contends that the Klein "does not suggest or even recognize the advantage of detecting duplicates as soon as possible, but rather much later". Specific suggestion from Klein is not necessary (*In re Sheckler*, 168 USPQ 716 (CCPA 1971), *In re Fine*, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (CA FC 1988)). One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that detecting duplicates as soon as possible is obviously advantageous over detecting duplicates much later.

The applicant contends that claim 2 specify a novel algorithm upon which duplicate invoices are identified. Examiner disagrees. Comparisons of invoices using vendor invoice designation, purchase order number, and item number is old and well known.

With respect to claims 3 and 6, applicant contends that "Klein states that such [identification of duplicates] cannot be done by a computer". This is not true. Klein's system uses neural networks (i.e. computers) to identify duplicates (abstract lines 1-3). Klein merely states that human intervention may be needed for verification purposes (column 6, lines 3-10).

Art Unit: 2764

Klein further states that such human intervention may be opted out in favor of automation (column 27, lines 26-31). Again, automation of known steps, implemented with computers or otherwise, is deemed to be obvious (*In re Venner*, 120 USPQ 192, 194; 262 F2d 91 (CCPA 1958)).

With respect to claims 6, 7, and 9, the applicant contends that “nowhere in the art of record is there any teaching of rejecting a computer detected duplicate invoice back to a vendor before it is entered into the accounts payable database”. Again, specific suggestion from art of record is not necessary (*In re Sheckler*, 168 USPQ 716 (CCPA 1971), *In re Fine*, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (CA FC 1988)). One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that detecting duplicates as soon as possible is obviously advantageous over detecting duplicates much later.

With respect to claim 8, applicant contends that sorting out duplicate invoices before entry into a database requires impermissible hindsight reconstruction of Klein and/or Geer. Geer discloses sorting at the time of entry (column 6, lines 40-45).

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Smith et al (US 5,111,395) discloses automated fund collection system including means to eliminate duplicate entries from a mailing list. Rail et al (US 5,680,611) discloses duplicate record detection.

Art Unit: 2764

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chang Y. Chung whose telephone number is (703) 308-6280. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 7:30 AM - 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James P. Trammell, can be reached on (703) 305-9768.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

c/o Technology Center 2700

Washington, D.C. 20231

Art Unit: 2764

or faxed to:

(703) 308-9051 (for formal communications intended for entry)

or:

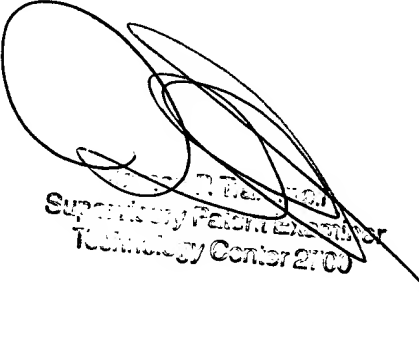
(703) 308-5397 (for informal or draft communications, please label
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT")

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive,
Arlington, VA, Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding
should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

Chang Y. Chung

August 2, 2000


Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2700